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ABSTRACT

This participant observation study describes how one beginning, bi-lingual, Puerto Rican, elementary art teacher instructs a class of Puerto Rican, inner-city children. The study concentrates on the types and frequency of teaching behaviors that occur for a beginning teacher; cultural perspectives that affect instruction, content selection, and teacher/student interaction; and the change in or consistency of behaviors over time. Content and comparative analyses and time sampling are used to determine types of instruction and their frequencies. Adaptive and survival instructional activities and strategies as well as metaphors of instructional bias are revealed in the statements and actions of the teacher. (Author/JH)

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Teaching Art to Hispanic Children From a Hispanic Perspective: A Prevalence of Patterning and Pressure

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Teaching Art to Hispanic Children From a Hispanic Perspective:
A Prevalence of Patterning and Pressure

Abstract

This participant observation study describes how one beginning, bi-lingual, Puerto-Rican, elementary art teacher instructs a class of Puerto-Rican inner-city children. The study concentrates on what types of teaching behaviors and their frequencies occur for a beginning teacher; cultural perspectives which affect instruction, content selection, and teacher/student interaction; and change or consistency of behaviors over time. Content and comparative analyses and time sampling are used to determine types of instruction and their frequencies. Adaptive and survival instructional activities and strategies as well as metaphors of instructional bias are revealed in the statements and actions of the teacher.

A Participant Observation Study of a Novice Puerto-Rican Art Teacher and her Puerto Rican Students: A Prevalence of Pressure and Patterning

The Hispanic population in America is rapidly growing. Between 1976 and 1986, the 18 to 24-year-old Hispanic population increased by 62%, and the number of high school graduates within it increased by 75%. The actual college enrollments, however, dropped to 45% within ten years (The American Council on Education, 1987). Over 1.3 million students in this country are bi-lingual (Lacayo, 1988). By the year 2000, 34% of the United States population will be from minorities (Schwartz & Exeter, 1989).

Literature on teaching Hispanic students and related art resources are slim and not readily available. Grigsby (1977) provides general information on youth from different cultures and summarizes art trends and artists from neglected ethnic groups, including Mexican-Americans. Rodriquez and Sherman (1983) designed a multicultural training manual on the art and music of Black Americans, American Indians, and Hispanic Americans. Lovano-Kerr (1988) supplies statistics on the Hispanic-American population and some general guidelines for teaching multicultural children. Stokrocki (1988a) also provides information on teaching students of minority cultures, especially Afro-Americans.

On the other hand, participant observation studies on minority groups and teachers are growing, such as Stokrocki's

(1987) study of a Black inner-city art teacher. Missing, however, is the viewpoint of Hispanic-American art teachers, few in number and just entering the teaching force. Documentation of their viewpoints and instruction in Hispanic contexts can provide important insights on teaching students of Hispanic-American heritage.

The purpose of this case study is to describe, analyze, and interpret the teaching of a beginning, bi-lingual, Puerto-Rican elementary art teacher in order to discover: 1) what types of teaching behaviors occur for a beginning teacher, 2) cultural perspectives which affect instruction, content selection and teacher/student interaction; and 3) change or consistency of behaviors over time.

Method

Participant observation is used as a process of observing, analyzing, and interpreting data gathered from an everyday situation to discern converging patterns which may be compared with other situations for generating insights and theory in teaching. Data collection and content/comparative analyses are the two phases of this method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

This study begins with data gathered in the form of a formal teacher interview, daily notes, informal student interviews, and photographs of student work and behavior. Questionnaires were not used due to students' limited English. Because of the loud noise level, audio and video taping would have been useless. Smith (1978) warns that

research recording tools must not interfere with the situation. He refers to George Homans who states, "There are neither good nor bad methods, but only methods that are more or less effective under particular circumstances in reaching objectives on the way to a distant goal" (Smith, 1978, p. 316). In this study, instruction is analyzed via time sampling, a means of timed note-taking (Barker, 1968), occurring at five minute intervals in this study and concentrating on the major categories of substantive, managerial, and appraisal instruction (Schmid, 1980). When categories become saturated with examples--no additional examples can be found which contribute to the properties of the categories under consideration--no need for further collection is necessary in generating concepts, as opposed to generalizing about them (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Photographic analysis, elicitation, and interpretation methods are finally used. Photographic analysis is a method by which one describes and classifies evidence for a detailed understanding of a phenomenon such as teaching (Stokrocki, 1985). By studying a series of photographs one can track the development of a skill or concept. Photographic elicitation is a technique whereby the researcher solicits the participants' opinions to clarify the meaning of the photographs. Finally, interpretation is necessary to explain the hidden meanings or structures in a series of photographs. This is accomplished by referring to the participants' aesthetic tradition. In this study, the concept of patterning

is tracked, and the teacher clarifies the development of patterning. Reference is made to the significance of patterns in Hispanic tradition as compared to the students' use of it in their art works.

Context

H teaches in a Midwest, low income, inner-city community with a high Puerto-Rican population (80%). In an intensive interview with her, H related her appraisal of her students (1/22/1989). She considers some of these students, who recently immigrated from Puerto Rico, very loud, spoiled, ill-mannered, uncooperative, and lack self-control. She explains, "These students are lower-class and from the coastal and country areas. They yell, are rude, and tell me how much they got away with there." Even though she is Puerto-Rican, came from a poor family, and was educated in an inner-city program, she finds the upbringing of these students very different from her own. The school coach shares her view: "They are wild! They come to the US because the welfare is better here." These expressed views suggest that there are class differences between faculty and students.

During the year, H travels to two elementary schools. She regards one school as intolerable because of large classes, unsupportive administration, low faculty morale, and high absentee rate. This study concentrates on her teaching at the other school, where she finds the situation more tolerable. At this school, the principal is also new,

Hispanic, and supportive. Little money now exists for art supplies, but more art materials will be ordered by next year. A large stage is used as an art room, which has a small sink but no ventilation. Storage is a major problem because the stage is also used to house music and sports equipment. Students work at large cafeteria tables, facing each other. Display space for artwork consists of a small cork strip above the blackboard, which is shared with another art teacher. Teaching in such contexts can also be considered extreme cases. The study of extreme cases is essential for comparisons with more ideal ones and and in building insights and theory (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Participants

Based on her outstanding student teaching performance in a Bachelor of Arts art education program, ability to speak Spanish, and recommendations by her student teaching supervisor, H was hired as a minority art teacher. In a private interview, her principal commented on her art teaching preparation, "She is a good teacher and was obviously trained very well" (9/30/88). We both agreed that since this was H's first year, I would wait for the Spring to begin my study and to allow time for her adjustment.

Two classes were visited once a week for eight weeks the first year. This study, however, concentrates on one, forty-minute, fifth-grade art class of 15 students, ten boys and five girls. This researcher returned the next year once a week for six months to see how the teacher was further

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adjusting to the situation.

Findings: H's Framework for Understanding

Several findings related to H's viewpoints and teaching emerge as instructional behaviors and their meanings. Due to limited space, each aspect is presented separately with its evidence.

Although no curriculum exists, lessons are sequential and emphasize pattern development: H was hired just before school started, so planning time was limited. Since no art curriculum existed, she relied on sequenced art units designed during student teaching. H explained her program and the development of repeated shapes into patterns in two-dimensional designs:

> Students began the year by making/cutting their own stencils and creating patterns, such as a radial design (Figure 1). I then showed them how to alternate positive and negative images in a checkerboard design (Figure 2). When painting, they were directed to explore different tools, such as forks, knives, and sponges with tempera paint similar to Jackson Pollack's style (Figure 3). By using a more controlled approach, I then encouraged them to paint a value chart based on a radial design with an added pattern (Figure 4). Next, the ideas of foreground, middleground, and background were introduced [watercolor landscape]. Later, I asked them to add objects of different sizes, such as birds (Figure 5).
> (Teacher's photographic analysis and elicitation)

In the Spring, this researcher observed her teaching a unit on three-dimensional work, beginning with Pariscraft masks with patterned decorations and continuing with paper and wood sculpture. The concepts of repetition of shape and diminution of size were emphasized. The resulting wood sculptures were also painted with patterns. A lesson on papier mache was shortened due to several field trips and assemblies. The unit closed with soap carving using repeated concave and convex shapes. H explained her reliance on pattern, "I stress it because students are inconsistent when working--putting any color next to another. Pattern helps them organize their ideas and colors." [The evolution of pattern is evident in photographic examples of her students' works. See Figures 1-.5]

Substantive teaching routine includes guiding formalistic concepts and art appreciation in small doses with student examples and photocopied handouts: Her substantive teaching, the formal introduction of a new concept or skill, was consistent (10 minutes per lesson or 25% of class time). (See Table 1). On one occasion (4/6/89), H began a sculpture unit:

> Remember when we made masks, we worked with 3-D, something you can see all around. If I hold up this sculpture it is 3-D? You can make sculpture by combining or carving materials. Which of these sculptures is made by combining? [She points to reproductions.] This one is done by the Louise Nevelson. Which one is carved? Yes, that one is

done by Henry Moore. And here is one done by Red Grooms.

On the blackboard, she next wrote the guiding concepts: repetition of shapes and gradation of size. She reminded them that they used repetition of shapes before in cut-out and painted designs. She explained that gradation means making the shape different sizes, and then asked students to point out these principles in photocopied and student examples. She added a new concept--exaggeration--and told students "to stretch their shapes out long or to expand them to make them fat." Then, she demonstrated how to roll shapes out of paper and exaggerate them to make a body, just as Red Grooms did.

Art appreciation is dominated by European examples, because Hispanic ones were not available to the teacher: Ten minutes of every class was dedicated to the introduction of a new artist and concepts. The artist's name was written on the board and his/her work explained, while students picked out the concept discussed in photocopied examples. H clarified, "I couldn't find examples of Hispanic art, but I am now making slides of Beardsley and Livingston's (1987) Hispanic Art in America, which I just found in the library."

Her managerial instruction is assertive--very strict, and highly structured: Managerial instruction is the organization of a classroom and its resources and the supervision of student behavior. H's established routines consisted of appointing student captains who distributed and collected supplies. She characterized her teaching style as "cocky--

being in control and having the upper hand." The low time frequency of her managerial instruction (23%) revealed that she indeed had control. (See Table 1.) For example, with one student who was nearly finished with his scultpture she joked, "Is it (sculpture) balanced yet?" He countered, "No it's flying." "You are so funny," she answered. She feels that this "cocky" attitude helps her relate to her students. This quick retaliatory style is necessary for survival, but so hard to keep positive, she admitted. She explains, "If I knew a teacher was weak, when I was a student, I played on it. Now I am cocky with my own students and it works." W admitted, however, that at the beginning of the year, her discipline time frequency was much higher.

She uses a system of rules, warnings, and negotiated deals to pattern correct behavior: For instance, on one occasion (4/13/89) when they were working on a wood sculpture project, she cautioned them to be patient for the glue to dry (the glue rule). Students often reminded each other that the teacher said to take their time. Another class rule is to stay in one's seat, which is difficult for these highly social children. Later, when the class became particularly unruly, she reprimanded them, "Don't waste my time. Do you want me to treat you like babies? You let me talk and I'll let you talk later. That's our deal." At the end of class, she reflected, "They were not bad today. I've separated them, but some are still acting-up." She clarified her actions, "All kids need discipline, especially these. In my other

school, a student stabbed a teacher with a pencil and the teacher was corrected because he confronted the student's machismo. This I do not agree with." She also patterns behavior by eliminating potential problems, such as collecting rubber bands, distributing long strips of masking tape herself, changing students' seats, and assigning tasks to her troublemakers.

In-process appraisal dominates her teaching (50%): In-process appraisal is the monitoring of activity and the presenting of new information (Sevigny, 1978). H's teaching is mostly informal and full of specific directions. She circulates around the room assisting individuals with their work in-process and appraising their activity. For example, one student wanted to know how to make a spiral. H then demonstrated while directing the class's attention: "Just cut out a circle. Now cut into it and around to make an unconnected circle. Now stand it up and try to curl it." To other students she directed, "Make the spirals different sizes. Make some bigger." Later she announced, "You can also bend a paper strip and make it into an accordian. Some of you are doing it already."

Students' reactions to sculpture are mixed; however, they are learning skills and concepts to adapt their ideas to materials: Some students found paper sculpture "fun and different;" others found it "long and boring." Some interpreted each other's work, as one little boy chanted, "Crystal's making a cemetery." Other students enjoyed playing

with the bouncing (spiral) forms. Some thought their work ugly: "I got only two shapes done," "I'm slow," and "Mine looks like a Picasso or a boomerang." Three students mentioned that they disliked wood sculpture--working with popsicle sticks, because it was difficult to glue and finish. On the other hand, one boy in particular liked working with them: "I like building things. I started from the bottom up by building a square [base] and then by adding "V" shapes. It's called Black and Blue Visa." H and this researcher both noticed that the students' work from the other elementary school was more creative; for example, their popsicle stick sculptures jackknifed in different directions and were painted with vivid colors and patterns (5/23/89). She commented, "Their work is so good, but their behavior is so bad."

Students also adapted their ideas to their material and form. For instance, in a lesson on soap carving, 13 students made carved soap faces (5/11/89). During the lesson, students exchanged comments, "It [the soap] broke, so now it's a whale," and "Meagen put different-colored soap scraps in her [soap] stop light." Finally, one student delightfully suggested, "If you mess up, you can change it. I did three times. Now it's a car." As this researcher casually walked around the class and asked students what they learned new, they remembered concepts such as three-dimensional and repeating and varying shapes (4/13/89).

Students also integrated learned concepts and skills into

their outside work. For example, on one special occasion at the end of the year, selected students were invited by H to make chalk murals outside on the playground (5/16/89). H remarked with satisfaction, "They are incorporating the patterns that I taught them, such as radials (Figure 6) and concentric designs (Figure 7). Here they are also blending colors, like we did when painting. Then H asked students to vote on the most successful examples and they mentioned, "The beast that looks real but has lots of colors and repeated shapes." and "The yellow one with bright colors and lots of radial designs" (Figure 7).

H constantly reviews concepts, grades students at the end of each class, and pushes them to succeed: At the beginning of every class, she reviews what students have learned. For example, during her sculpture unit, she asked students to name three ways to make sculpture and in what projects did they combine materials, shape them, and carve images (5/11/89). Furthermore, at the end of the lesson she asked individuals to show her what they had learned. She quizzed, "Stephen, show me gradation in size--different sized shapes. Excellent, nice job." She feels that they need praise and encouragement for work that is well done. During this time she also grades students' progress (5 min.), because of lack of storage space. Her grading system consisted of marks for excellence, satisfactory, and needs improvement. At times, students worked too slow, and she graded them on their effort and attitude alone. She insisted that each student show and

tell her what they had accomplished. H reflected:

> Hispanic students need to be pushed and encouraged. My art supervisor not only inspired me, but pushed me a lot--until the end, when I got my job. I push my students now, because they get lazy. They get upset with me, as I did with my own teacher, and they get mad at me when I won't speak Spanish. They feel that I'm denying my roots. I feel they need to learn English. I realize their potential and push them to follow-through on their work. I know how they feel, but I also am aware of my responsibility and challenge.

Interruptions are frequent and compromises abound: H often complained of class interruptions by teachers and administrators, although this researcher only noticed one interruption of class time. At the end of one period (4/20/89), for example, the school coach requested to use [her classroom] the stage for festivities in honor of Hispanic Week (nonfuctional time, 5 min., Table 1). A short argument ensued with H refusing to give up her room until the end of the next period. She commented on this intrusion:

> They came to take my room for a dance, which is unnecessary and without notice. They do this all the time. We will need to clean up 10 minutes early, so they can move the desks.

H is disappointed by such disturbances, but realizes that such behaviors are compromises. She only wished that she had more time.

Postscript: The Second Year Changes: This researcher returned to the setting the next year to observe this class

at the sixth grade level once a week for six months. During the second year, the class was much bigger (n=28), due to many students leaving Puerto Rico after the hurricanes. H now taught mostly in Spanish, because most of her students could not speak English yet. Managerial behavior remained relatively constant (23%) because H was reinforcing and reviewing class rules with new students (see Table 1). I noticed that she seemed more relaxed. Behavioral rules were on display and a bulletin board proudly exhibited examples of her students' artwork. Later, she commented to me:

> This year has been a lot easier. I now know the routine. I had to prove myself to students and the principal. Even though classes are bigger, student work is better. They know my expectations. Sometimes teaching art concepts are difficult because there is no Spanish word equivalent, such as the idea of overlap. It takes longer for them to understand such concepts.

I interviewed the class informally, while H translated, and we discovered that students considered art as fun (20/28), a special class (18/28), and mixing colors (20/28). They preferred to draw at home (18/28), but to paint [imaginary things] in school (12/28). They had no art dislikes, probably because this was one of their first school art classes, and drawing was not emphasized. Students expressed their fondness for their teacher because she is nice, funny, helpful, explains things well. They were also pleased that she "doesn't holler at them," "is not crabby,"

and "let's them talk." Observational evidence also suggested that students appreciated their art teacher. They called her "Missy," and younger children often waved to her from the cafeteria next door. Positive regard for the teacher was also revealed in physical traces, such as a graffiti saying, "This class rules!" on the paper-covered desks.

Appraisal instruction increased slightly (50%-55%), but instructional patterning was still dominant in her teaching (see Table 1). For instance, after reviewing art elements with students, H wanted students to experiment in color mixing (1/9/90). She directed them to prepare their pictures by making basic shapes with rulers and tracing various sized cups and bowls. In Spanish, she told them to repeat and overlap large and small shapes to make a pattern. In the next lesson, students experimented mixing cool colors for their imaginary city of repeated geometric shapes. Photographic evidence indicates that students understood and used the concept of pattern, even though it was not the major focus of the lesson.

Conclusions

A comparison of the various conceptual themes discovered reveals several insights about one beginning, female, Hispanic art teacher and her survival art teaching of low-income Puerto-Rican students.

Types of teaching behaviors of a beginning art teacher: The first year of art teaching may be extremely demanding for a beginning Hispanic art teacher. Unfortunately beginning

teachers find it difficult to focus on students, since they are more concerned about their own condition and rites of passage. In so doing, this beginning art teacher imposed highly sequenced lessons, simplified concepts and skills with constant review, art appreciation in small doses, and three-dimensional kinesthetic activities. In-process appraisal and individual attention became the dominant means of instruction, and student process, effort, and attitude were graded daily. Many of these behaviors are generally used by inner-city art teachers (Stokrocki, 1989).

The cultural perspectives which affect instruction, content selection, and teacher-student interaction: At the beginning of the year, teaching newly immigrated Puerton-Rican students demanded a tough managerial instruction, a strong-willed art teacher, much organization and monitoring of supplies, lesson structure and sequence, and some flexibility. Most beginning art teachers develop such mechanisms for survival as they suffer a period of proving their worth (Hawke, 1980). In comparison to Hawke's white male, Canadian high school art teacher, H is a minority, elementary female art teacher working in a difficult situation. Her teaching enculturation period seemed more pressured than his.

The ability to take control and to assert oneself seemed important for this beginning female teacher, but class and cultural differences are noted also between the Hispanic teacher and her Hispanic students. She compares the seemingly more permissive and laid-back educational background of her

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students as compared to her American educational training. Evidence suggests that years of conditioning have forced this female teacher to assume this assertive "cocky" teaching role. Questionnaires of Chicana women revealed that negative influences provided impetus for these young women to succeed by assuming a stance of resistence, challenge, and contestation as well as accommodation in order to survive schooling (Achor & Morales, 1990). Similarly, such a stance can be interpreted in the development of a "cocky attitude" in his young Puerto Rican female teacher.

Initially, the enculturation of Puerto-Rican students was problemmatic for this female Puerto-Rican teacher and the tendency was to try to re-organize student behavior patterns. In other words, she exercised her authority to explain and enforce the rules of the American educational system and to negotiate deals. Forced negotiation is a form of discipine which seems prevalent in extreme cases (Stokrocki, 1988b) and seems to be a necessary form of survival in beginning art teachers (Hawke, 1980). To reinforce behavior types appropriate for American schools, these Puerto-Rican students seemed to be "pressured" to succeed and to follow-through on their endeavors.

Under such restraints and pressures, art may or may not offer beginning Puerto-Rican students a positive means of self-expression and self-esteem. Unless art appreciation activities are expanded to include art examples from the students' Hispanic-American folk backgrounds and contemporary

cultures, few role models will be available to which they can relate.

Change or consistency of behaviors over time: Over a two-year time, the instructor persisted in her instructional use of patterning--the repetition of lines, shapes, and colors in two dimensional forms and concave and convex shapes and gradation of sizes in three-dimensional forms. Patterns further developed into such organizational devices as radials and concentric designs. The reliance on pattern in general is relevent to a student's cognitive development--progressing from simple to complex skills (Piaget, 1936/1952). Building organizational skills is even more important for those students "at risk" of dropping out of school (Werlage, 1983). Space in this article does not allow for an adequate discussion of the students' use of patterning and how it relates to Hispanic art here, but such implications for a sociology of art may need to be pursued.

This study does <u>not</u> stipulate how Hispanic students <u>should</u> be instructed, but serves as a description of how such art teaching is conducted. The study also reveals adaptive and survival instructional activities and strategies that may be used by beginnning art teachers in this context. More studies of teaching Hispanic students in different contexts will help develop insights and theory.

Responses:

Unsolicited comments on this study revealed differences in opinion about its worth to the field. Why my portrayal was

more empathetic to the plight of the beginning art teacher, others were more critical. Clark (1990) first found that reports of qualitative inquiry can be used by teachers and researchers in different ways and that exchanging opinions about the implications of a study are insights on how it can be of use or continues to be a problem.

Raymond Padilla, Director of The Hispanic Research Center at Arizona State University commented on this study: "It is very difficult to generalize and distinguish between 1) the struggles of being a novice teacher, 2) working in a low income inner-city school with morale problems, 3) teaching a subject with inadequate curriculum, facilities, and materials, 4) and teaching students' of class/subcultural differences." He further raised the question: Why not speak Spanish? Bilingual education is still a political battle between the conservative factions to retain cultural, namely language, identity and the more liberal, educated faction that believes in learning English well. Porter (1990), an Hispanic teacher and a product of American inner-city education, argues for more attention to the children and less to the politicians. She believes that both goals can be accomplished.

Anonymous editors of Studies in Art Education commented on the hidden metaphors of instructional bias in the statements and actions of the teacher revealed in such terms as lazy, loud, spoiled, and ill-mannered students, cocky attitude, and pressure to succeed.

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(Optional Table)

Table 1

A Time Sampling of H's Instructional Behaviors

	Substantive		Managerial		Appraisal		Nonf.		Total	
	min.	%	min.	%	min.	%	min.	%	min.	%
4/6/89	10		15		15		0		40	100
	paper sculpture									
4/13/89	10		15		15		0		40	
	wood sculp									
4/20/89	10		10		15		5		40	
	paper mache									
4/26/89	10		5		25		0		40	
	paper mache									
5/11/89	8		2		30		0		40	
	soap carving									
5/23/89	10		5		25		0		40	
	chalk mural making									
Average	10	25%	9	23%	20	50%	.8	2%	40	100%
12/5/89	10		5		35		0		40	
	christmas cards (iron-on transfer)									
1/9/90	15		10		15		0		40	
	review of art elements: prep. for museum field trip									
2/23/90	18		5		17		0		40	
	basic shape/primary color painting									
3/13/90	2		13		20		5		40	
Average	9	23%	8	20%	22	55%	1	2.5%	40	100%